



Health Program





Mission

To ensure that health issues do not affect education. This mission stems from the Kibale Forest Schools Program (KFSP) mission- to conserve Kibale National Park through programs that support education, health, and care for the environment. The health program works to conserve the Kibale National Park through health education in sixteen government primary schools and their surrounding communities around Kibale National Park. These schools include: Kasiisi, Kigarama, Kiko, Kyanyawara, Rweteera, Rutoma B, Mituuli, Kiamara, Kyakatara, Komyamperre, Pere-Achte, Iruhuura, Rwenkuba, Nyabweya, Kasenda and Kitere primary schools.

The health program aims to keep children in school through promoting personal hygiene, sanitation, nutrition, sexual and reproductive health and the prevention of malaria.

When communities adopt preventative, habitual health practices, they are better fit to become educated and have income-producing jobs. In turn, community members will be more informed on conservation and less likely to seek resources from Kibale forest.

What We Do

The health programming is organized around three terms of every school year. Before each school year begins, KFSP holds a Patrons' Workshop. As an organization we strive for long-term sustainability, which we believe will only happen if all of our stakeholders take ownership of our programs. In order to accomplish this goal, head teachers, senior men and women teachers, Village Health Teams (VHTs), representatives from health centres, government and local officials, School Management Committees (SMC) and Parent-Teachers Association (PTA) chairpersons attend our annual planning workshop. At the workshop, they collaborate with KFSP to design health talks and activities for the year that will match both their needs and interests. We believe that each school knows best what they need to succeed, so we request that each school design activity schedule that fulfills what they are trying to accomplish.



Every two years, KFSP also holds a Peer Educator Workshop where the health team trains teachers, Village Health Team members (VHTs), and student peer educators- two girls and two boys from P.5 and P.6 classes from each of the sixteen schools. The attendees are taught lessons and implementable solutions in the three-four topics of

food and nutrition, personal hygiene and sanitation, malaria and sexual and reproductive health.

Within these topics, students learn how to make proper rubbish pits. The rubbish pits are designed to hold the trash within one small area on school grounds rather than have trash spread throughout the schoolyard. They make two separate rubbish pits: one for biodegradable food and objects and the other for non-biodegradable objects. Making and maintaining a rubbish pit teaches students the importance of keeping their environment clean. Furthermore, the rubbish pits with biodegradable objects provide natural compost.



Students are also taught how to make tippy taps. Tippy taps are a simple way for students to wash their hands before meals, after meals, and after using the latrine. A tippy tap involves a small jerry can that hangs about four feet above the ground between two sticks. The jerry can is then attached to a lever on the ground. When a student stands on the lever, the jerry can shifts down and lets out a small, steady stream of water allowing a student to easily wash their hands with little water waste. Tippy taps encourage students to stop the spread of germs through regular hand washing.

Students are taught to use local material such as small pieces of wood and reeds to make food storage racks. These shelves serve as classroom food storage racks to keep the students' food containers off the classroom floor and prevent contamination and the spread of germs.



Furthermore, students are taught the principles of inexpensive, water-conserving permagardens. Through deep watering channels and coal-enriched soil, the gardens can retain water through the dry season. These small, household gardens are also designed to supplement the vitamin- and mineral-poor diets of students' families.

Students also make latrine covers to keep insects and vermin out of the latrines without vents and prevent bad odors from spreading outside of those latrines. The students learn how to make latrine covers out of local material, similar to the material from the food storage racks. These handcrafted latrine covers are used at the schools and in students' homes.



To prevent malaria, it is important that students can properly use mosquito nets. The health team instructs students on how to repair mosquito nets in order to increase their longevity. On World Malaria Day, the health team also organizes mosquito net repair workshops in the KFSP schools.

Through our infrastructure support for schools, we construct girl's user-friendly latrines with washing facilities and large private barriers around them, making girls feel comfortable and safe at school especially when they're having their periods. The program has also built sanitary latrines for boys and staff. More so, we promote the use of safe and clean water in schools through providing schools with water collection materials and constructing boreholes.



Girls learn about the menstrual cycle and how to stay hygienic throughout their cycles. Another unique part of the KFSP health program is the Re-Usable Menstrual Pad initiative (RUMPs).

The KFSP health team teaches both girls and boys how to make RUMPs as a cheap and hygienic option using clean cloth materials. This initiative was started in 2017 after phasing out the sanitary pads distribution program in five schools which was seen as not sustainable.

In addition to making pads and sensitizing students about sexual and reproductive health, the health team also emphasizes good communication strategies and safe spaces so that students will feel comfortable approaching teachers, parents, VHTs, health workers and potentially other peers about sensitive issues. The goal is to create an environment where students will not feel afraid to ask questions seeking accurate information about sexual and reproductive health.

Our health team trains and supports parents in three pilot schools to become the primary sources of sexual and reproductive health information to their children. This initiative has been a success and we hope to extend to more schools if resources allow but we also assume that the parents already in the program will use the skills and knowledge to support other parents.



KFSP health program also promotes health awareness through health-themed Music, Dance, and Drama (MDD) competitions. This initiative uses the arts to reinforce the health lessons that were taught throughout the year. The competitions are judged on their delivery, creativeness, dancing and singing techniques.

Throughout the terms, the health team delivers health talks to the KFSP schools, checks on the progress of the activities taught at the peer education and Patrons workshops, and follows up on health talks that teachers, VHTs, health workers and students deliver on their own. The hope is that primary school children will apply these lessons to their personal lives and then carry it into their communities.

The KFSP health team is always actively building partnerships with both government and private health centers and the local Village Health Teams (VHTs). We partner with the following health centers and their respective VHTs: Ruteete HCIII, Rurama HCII, Iruhuura HCIII, Kasenda HCIII, Kahangi HCII, Kyakatara HCIII, Kakinga HCIII, Kaswa HCIII, African Christian Fellowship and

Kibale Conservation and Health Centre II. KFSP, health workers and the VHTs want to work together to provide health education and medical services to schools and villages around Kibale National Park. The KFSP health team is providing VHTs continued training and teaching material so that they are equipped to transfer knowledge to primary school children and the communities they serve. VHTs, in addition to parents, also help the KFSP health team by following up on our health activities at students' homes and in their communities.



Through our partnerships with health centers and VHTs, we coordinate and support vaccination programs especially HPV and Tetanus vaccination in the KFSP supported schools. We encourage schools and parents to collaborate with their nearby health centers and make full utilization of the vaccines and other health services.



We also partner with the Uganda Wildlife Authority and government health centers to provide basic affordable medical assessment and treatment services to people neighboring with Kibale National Park in the districts of Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Kamwenge, Bunyangabu and Kasese.



We also invest in research that contribute to the generation of new knowledge in improving both human and animal health. Currently, we're implementing a study in partnership with Kibale Eco Health Project to investigate the circulating respiratory viruses in the children neighboring Kibale National park and to understand how those viruses impact Chimpanzee health.

The data that we shall generate may guide us to find ways of preventing cross infections between humans and chimpanzees.